

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2010

Honorable Eric Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We are writing on behalf of the thousands of veterans of Deep South Texas who continue to drive more than 300 miles to receive VA inpatient care. These veterans proudly served their country and they deserve to have the best health care possible. Deep South Texas is one of the fastest growing regions of the country and the migration of retired veterans either permanently or for good portions of the year will continue to significantly contribute to this population explosion.

As you know, the VA is currently building a new medical facility in Harlingen which will address many of the health issues these veterans face. We appreciate your support for this facility and the speed with which it is being completed. We understand that it will open in early 2011. However, the facility will not include inpatient beds or an emergency room. Patients will still have to travel to San Antonio for inpatient services and receive emergency care at local hospitals that often have no understanding of the unique health care needs of these veterans.

In this regard, we respectfully request that you come to South Texas and hear first-hand from our veterans the difficulties they face. We also urge your support for adding emergency and inpatient services to the medical facility in Harlingen so that the veterans of Deep South Texas will finally have the full hospital that they have been pleading for over the past forty years.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress



Solomon Ortiz
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress